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ABSTRACT

Information about higher education in California is presented with suggestions for Florida. Cooperation between the public and private sectors in California exists in many forms, including the support or opposition of legislation. For instance, private university presidents have publicly criticized as inadequate budget recommendations for state universities made by California's two most recent governors, and a public university president has opposed any legislation that threatened to control the educational operations of private colleges. Steps that might promote harmony between the independent and state-supported sectors in Florida include: less talk about segmental interests and more talk about student interests; not talking about saving the private sector but adopting a policy that allows good colleges to succeed and poor ones to fail; correcting the myth that any funds going to students in private institutions come out of the funds of state-supported universities; dispelling the idea that a college must have a low tuition charge in order to provide access; reexamining the goals of higher education in Florida in light of new conditions and circumstances; and allowing the private sector to participate in statewide decision-making. Recommendations based on a study of private colleges and universities by the California Postsecondary Commission include (1) continuance of existing state policy to assist students with financial need who desire to attend a private institution, and (2) coordination of state policy with changes in federal student assistance programs. It is also suggested that a healthy private sector is necessary for the achievement of important California goals, which are listed. (SW)

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CASE STUDY: CALIFORNIA

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SHEEO

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Case Study: California

by

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A harmonious relationship between the independent and state supported sectors of higher education exists in many states. In few states is this relationship as unharmonious as it is in Florida.

A major factor in the development of higher education in California has been the competition and cooperation between the two sectors.

The rivalry between Berkeley and Stanford assisted both institutions to move to the highest levels of academic quality. When new campuses of the University of California were added, the highly academic program was maintained. This allowed room for the State University and the community colleges to achieve excellence in their educational missions. And, of course, the quality of the state supported institutions, available to students at low or no tuition, means that independent colleges must be good in order to survive and succeed.

Cooperation between the two sectors exists in many forms in California. It is very important at the political level, where

the state universities and independent institutions frequently join forces to support or oppose legislation. Last year, action by independent segment representatives was instrumental in eliminating budget language that would have put serious restrictions on the University of California in several areas of administration. Independent university presidents have publicly criticized as inadequate budget recommendations for state universities made by California's two most recent governors. David Saxon, the president of the University of California, would oppose any legislation that threatened to control the educational operations of independent colleges. And he has consistently given support to bills whose purpose is to strengthen the state student assistance programs, financial aid that goes to students in all segments but in much larger amounts to students at independent institutions. David Saxon and other leaders of state-supported universities see that a strong independent sector is essential to the quality and freedom of all of higher education. I believe that by working together the two sectors can obtain more funds for higher education than they can by fighting each other or by pursuing only their own direct interests. The pie isn't of fixed size. Each has its own group of trustees, alumni, and friends to render assistance. It doesn't make any sense to fight publicly. Resolve differences behind closed doors. Then go to the governor and legislature with a package both sectors can support. Then bring on the constituents.

What steps might be taken to promote harmony between the independent and state supported sectors in Florida? Here are some suggestions:

1) Less talk about segmental interests, more talk about student interests. The recent expansion of the federal student assistance programs makes it possible for a state like Florida to provide full access for Florida college students--that is, to make it economically possible for students to attend any institution in the state they are qualified to attend. With the expansion of the Federal BEOG program and the distribution of institutions throughout the state, Florida is moving closer to the goal of full access. I suspect that only a fairly modest strengthening of state grants, to supplement federal student assistance, is needed to achieve that goal for virtually all Florida students.

2) Stop talking about "saving the private sector" because to some persons that may sound like every last independent institution should survive, no matter how poor a job it is doing in educating students. I believe the public interest is best served, not by a policy that assures the survival of poor institutions, nor by one that allows good colleges to be lost, but by one that permits the poor to fail and the good to succeed. In most states, state student assistance programs can serve as the major instrument for implementing such a policy.

3) Send to the junk yard the myth that any state funds

that go to students in independent institutions come out of the hides of state supported universities. On the contrary, the state subsidies in the form of grants that students accept to attend independent institutions are substantially smaller than the state subsidies these students would receive if they enrolled in state universities. This is because a large percentage of the cost of educating a student in an independent college is met by funds from private sources while a student in a state university is supported mainly by tax dollars. If you believe in the fixed pie theory this means that state universities are better off by having independent colleges maintain their share of enrollment. Why? Because if state institutions had to accomodate a substantial shift of students from independent institutions while the state provided no additional funds for higher education, state universities would receive fewer state tax dollars for each student. If you believe in the flexible pie then the existence of a healthy independent sector benefits state universities as above and also by an expansion of the pie that the combined efforts of the two sectors may help bring about.

4) A second myth of dispel is the idea that a college must have a low tuition charge in order to provide access. It is difficult to understand how any person with even casual knowledge of college enrollment patterns could make such an assertion. First of all, removing the tuition barrier isn't enough for the lowest income students. They usually need student aid

funds to help cover room and board charges as well. Secondly, the large numbers of low income students in high tuition independent institutions around the country show that tuition doesn't impede access for such students. To illustrate the point, parental income of entering freshmen at the University of Southern California, with tuition of over $4000 a year, averages several thousand dollars less than parental income of freshmen students entering UCLA, with tuition of around $600. Student assistance programs are, of course, the answer.

5) Re-examine the goals of higher education in Florida in light of new conditions and circumstances. For example, how might state student assistance programs be changed to realize more fully the goal of access for all qualified students?

Efficient use of taxpayer funds is moving up the scale of higher educational goals. What policies might permit the state to make greater use of the resources of the independent sector and thus get more mileage out of tax dollars?

Quality of education certainly is another goal. How do independent institutions enhance quality? What new state policies might allow them to make a greater contribution?

An extensive study of independent colleges and universities was completed by the California Postsecondary Commission earlier this year.

Among its findings and recommendations were the following:

A. The existence of a healthy independent sector is necessary for the achievement of several important State goals in California postsecondary education.

These goals are:

*to provide students the greatest possible opportunity to attend a postsecondary institution which most closely meets their perceived educational goals;

*to encourage and maintain independent governance of a major segment of California postsecondary education;

*to encourage diversity and constructive competition between the independent and public sectors, thereby providing a stimulus for innovation and positive change in all of postsecondary education;

*to encourage the most effective utilization of the State's postsecondary resources:

*to promote and maintain a diverse range of postsecondary alternatives for students in California;

*to provide, to a reasonable degree, financial assistance to individuals with demonstrated financial need who desire to enroll in an independent college and university;

*to promote access to postsecondary education for all persons in California regardless of income, race, ethnicity, age, sex, physical disabilities, or geographies; and

*to promote high-quality learning environments for students in postsecondary education.

B. Existing State policy to provide assistance to qualified students with financial need who desire to enroll in an independent institution should be continued, and should be coordinated with changes in federal student-assistance programs. These programs are desirable and should be maintained in a way that will (1) give students the opportunity to attend the postsecondary institution which most closely meets their educational needs (2) give independent institutions a reasonable and fair opportunity to compete with public institutions in the recruitment and education of students, and (3) encourage constructive competition between public and independent institutions to promote high-quality and diversified educational opportunities.

6) Harmony between the sectors also will be promoted if there is appropriate participation of independent institutions in state level decision-making that affects all of higher education or independent higher education alone. Is there a proper balance between sectors in the makeup of the Florida Postsecondary Education Commission? Does the independent sector have a full opportunity to present ideas and opinions in the deliberations of the advisory and technical committees that assist the commission?

The Statutory Advisory Committee of the California Postsecondary Education Commission is so named because its existence is established in legislation. It is made up of the heads of the three state supported segments--University of California, State University and Colleges, and Community Colleges--plus the Superintendent of Public Instruction and leaders from the independent and proprietary sectors. These persons or their designees meet with the Commission director in advance of every meeting of the Commission. They review each agenda item, help plan future work, and are kept up to date on all important Commission matters. This has worked very well. The independent sector in California is well informed and has been involved in everything it wanted to be a part of. Last year I served as the Chairman of the Statutory Advisory Committee.

Less concern for uniformity and control and more concern

for diversity and institutional autonomy may be indicated. The independence of independent institutions means a relative degree of freedom in decision-making and a high degree of self-reliance in matching income to expenditures and visa versa. These are qualities that make independent institutions valuable to society, including students and taxpayers. These institutions function best when state officials resist their own impulse to pull the independents more into the system in order to make things neat and orderly. Perhaps a little more independence would help state supported institutions as well.

Your state has a unique opportunity to shape the development of higher education during the coming decades. Yours is one of a handful of states where the college age population may continue to grow. You are more sun belt than anybody. Your state legislators have urged, indeed insisted, that you get on with the task. Consider again what harmony between the sectors could bring. Give it a try.